



The Cleveland Museum of Art

EXTRAORDINARY COLLECTION OF ASIAN BRONZES EXHIBITED FOR THE FIRST TIME

WHO Martha Limbach Carter and her husband, Thomas Lynn Carter, of Madison, Wisconsin, have given the Cleveland Museum of Art a collection of 137 bronze mirrors, mostly from ancient China, making CMA's holdings of this material one of the finest groups outside the Far East. Given over time from 1995 to 1999, their gift is in honor of Sherman E. Lee, world-renowned Asian art expert and CMA director 1958–83. Dr. Martha Carter knew Dr. Lee when she studied art history at Case Western Reserve University and later served on CMA's education staff. Ju-hsi Chou, CMA's curator of Chinese art, has organized the exhibition.

WHAT **Chinese Bronze Mirrors from the Carter Collection** (working title) is an exhibition of about 100 examples spanning two millennia. They range from pocket size to about 15 inches in diameter, each with one polished side and one decorative. Almost all have perforated knobs in the centers of their decorated sides, through which ribbons were strung to hold the mirrors.

Some have simple sun and moon decorations. The earliest to be shown, from the 5th or 4th century BC, is decorated with a motif known to Western connoisseurs as the "four Ts," signifying mountains. It has an intricate background of curving lines, grids, and maze-like designs. The latest one commemorated a wedding in the late 18th or early 19th century. It has a central inscription of "double happiness" and a border decoration of bats — for good fortune. It is one of the few Chinese bronze mirrors outside Asia with a "handle" like a Western-style hand mirror.

Elaborate mandalas like those created in sand or silk in China and Central Asia adorn others. Other designs include the signs of the zodiac, stories of the constellations, scenes of traditional heroes, symbols for the seasons, innumerable animals and insects in infinitely varying poses, and simple Confucian inscriptions. In one of the most superb and detailed examples of bronze casting, a series of roughly 3/8-inch squares contain inscriptions that are distinct and readable.

**WHEN AND
WHERE**

Sept. 17, 2000–Nov. 26, 2000 at the Cleveland Museum of Art.

PUBLICATION A catalogue will contain descriptive information and illustrations of selected pieces by Dr. Chou and metallurgical analyses by chief conservator D. Bruce Christman. All works in the Carter gift, whether chosen for this exhibition or not, will be listed in the book.

INFORMATION 1-888-CMA-0033, (216) 421-7350, or www.clemusart.com.

MEDIA

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